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THE BOOK CLUB OF CALIFORNIA

FOUNDED IN 1912, The Book Club of California is a non-profit association of book-lovers and collectors who have a special interest in Pacific Coast history, literature, and fine printing. Its chief aims are to further the interests of book collectors in the West and to promote an understanding and appreciation of fine books.

The Club is limited to six hundred members. When vacancies exist membership is open to all who are in sympathy with its aims and whose applications are approved by the Board of Directors. Regular Membership involves no responsibilities beyond payment of the annual dues of $12.00. Dues date from the month of the member's election.

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QUARTERLY *News-Letter*

A SURVEY OF CONTEMPORARY HAND PRESS PRINTING IN NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

By Jackson Burke

ON THE FIFTH of February 1929, the then not quite one-year-old Roxburghe Club of San Francisco met at The Grabhorn Press for the "Printing of [a] *Souvenir* by members themselves, each one participating more or less in its production." Members of the club who were present still talk of a phenomenal production line staffed by Edwin and Robert Grabhorn, Valenti Angelo, Herbert Fahey, John Gannon, Alfred Kennedy and William Wheeler. It provided each member with his name, handset in type, to be incorporated into a form already on a hand press, from which an impression was taken and the sheet then bound into a book to be carried away at the end of the evening.

This is the Hand Press at its very best. The *souvenir,* "The begynning of the subtyl historyes and fables of Esope which were translated out of Frensshe in to Englysshe by William Caxton in the yere MCCCLXXXIII," is a desired rarity not because it was printed by hand, but because of the association of pleasant pageantry, ritual and hocus pocus in its production.

This is not the first item listed in the accompanying check list, but it admirably serves to introduce the subject. For it is an example of the type of participation in printing that has beguiled many into coveting a hand press as a means of producing items desirable for their content, format and associations. Of course, the proud owner of one soon learns he has become the servant of a Frankenstein monster, but enough have survived the first disappointments to provide material for this study.

The Grabhorn hand press is the first in point of time to be considered

EDITOR'S NOTE: Jackson Burke's article, above, is a companion piece to "Hand Press Printing in Southern California," by Ward Ritchie, which appeared in the Winter 1947 issue of the *News-Letter.*

in this survey. Used normally as a proof press, it was a medium-sized Washington press of Hoe manufacture. It was used for the production of the items listed under The Grabhorn Press and those of Jane Grabhorn's Jumbo Press. It is now owned by Harry Porte, whose larger and more ornate press seemed more desirable to the Grabhorns, who engineered a trade. Nothing covered in this check list has been produced on this larger press.

The only book printed by hand at The Grabhorn Press was *Book ballades for Roxburghers*, by Andrew Lang. This was done at the instigation of Albert M. Bender for presentation to the members of the Roxburghe Club at their third meeting. Albert Bender's influence is present to a large degree in the work covered in this monograph, for no small number of the broadsides and ephemeral pieces were done at his suggestion and some at his expense. But one other piece was done at The Grabhorn Press and this item too was an audience participation piece done under the stimulus of the Roxburghe Club.

Carl I. Wheat, co-founder of the Roxburghe Club with Samuel T. Farquhar and others, would have found a place in this study whether or not he had ever possessed a hand press, for the influence of the group is of importance in it. He did, however, succumb to the lure and himself operated the Wheatstalk Press in Palo Alto. A "very small Washington hand press," it provided Wheat with "pleasurable recreation in place of golf," and in 1928 two items were produced before it was stored away in a state of "innocuous desuetude." The press has recently been brought out of storage for loan to the Zamorano Club, and Wheat hopes to use it again.

A number of names appear in connection with printing in Northern California in association with not one but several imprints. Not all of these represent hand-press printing. James D. Hart printed with Herbert Reynolds as the Penguin Press, with Hartley E. Jackson as the Harvest Press, with Wilder Bentley at the Archetype Press, and with his wife at The Hart Press. Herbert Reynolds and Albert Sperisen used the Penguin Press imprint for one item and Sperisen now prints with Harold Seeger under the name of the Black Vine Press and with Bertram Johnck and, more recently, Ted Anderson, as the Toyon Press.

The normal course of an interest in printing other than professional runs from machine or hand operated self-inking platen press to the acquisition of a true hand press. The course of the Eucalyptus Press, started in 1932 and still operated by Rosalind Keep at Mills College,

followed the reverse pattern. Her first two items were produced on a large hand press which, lacking tympans and frisket, presented too many mechanical difficulties and so was relegated to a subsidiary function, and a Colt's Armory press acquired for printing.

The four presses thus far covered have been operated by professional printers as entertainment (Grabhorn); by a lawyer and student of Californiana for recreation (Wheatstalk); by persons interested in printing as an avocation (Penguin), and by an English professor (Eucalyptus).

The establishment in 1934 of the Acorn, later the Archetype Press, by Wilder Bentley marks the first appearance of a professional hand press in Northern California. No better description of the physical plant of this press or of its aims can be found than that of the printers themselves in the prospectus for *The Poetry Folios:*

THE PRESS: The Archetype Press of Wilder and Ellen Bentley is the only professional hand press engaged in book production in the United States [1936]. The physical equipment consists of three hand presses (two for Super-Royal, 27½x 20½, and one for Crown, 21x16¼), a few hundred pounds of type, and a small typographical library housed in a small workshop in Euclid Court, Northgate, Berkeley.... Our press was named and dedicated in 1934 by Porter Garnett, then Master of the Laboratory Press, Carnegie Institute of Technology.... The unfortunate termination, in 1935, of the Laboratory Press, leaves the Archetype Press, unendowed, to attempt that which the Laboratory Press, with the advantage of institutional support compassed only with great difficulty in consonance with its motto, *Nil Vulgarae, Nil Pertriti, Nil Inepti.*

THE PRINTERS: ... In fairness to the pride we feel in being printers—if for no other reason—we would declare that we have a decent regard for our profession, and that we are determined to practice it with honor to its great tradition, yet without capitulation to any historic style.

We are sensible of obligations: to the present, to print with legibility and dignity, and with beauty so far as we can; to the future, to print with permanence, using honest materials and methods. We study the methods by which the master printers of four centuries have achieved permanence, nay immortality: we resort to their methods not out of mere sentimentality for the past, but because we see the beauty, integrity and endurance of their works.

In 1939 Bentley acquired a Colt's Armory press which was operated along with the hand presses but without the slightest satisfaction to the printers. After several books were produced it was disposed of and hand presswork alone again occupied the printers. Not for long, however, for in 1940 an announcement informed "Collectors of Fine Print-

ing" that the Archetype Press had closed. It would be wrong to conclude consideration of the activities of Wilder Bentley without mentioning his influence on the other presses covered in this survey. Almost all, if not all, the printers mentioned here have at one time or another turned to Bentley for advice and found it readily available.

In the following listing of the work of the Archetype Press four items are productions of the Broadside Club. This loose organization *almost* got into the habit of meeting at the Archetype Press on one Saturday each month. The avowed purpose of the group was the production of a broadside under the sponsorship of one or more of the members. Many participated; some are mentioned in this article and others included George Ezra Dane, George Fields, Chiura Obata, Fulmer Mood, Jack Starkweather, Lloyd Hoff and Thomas MacDonald. The meetings were always pleasant, but in the end the work of producing the broadside usually devolved upon Wilder and Ellen Bentley, and the project was gradually abandoned.

Among the most interesting of the hand-press operations in Northern California was that of Jane Grabhorn, under the imprint of the Jumbo Press. Although it was hardly "experimental," some rather startling innovations in spacing and other time-honored conventions are evident in its productions. Yet, during its brief career, this press did some beautiful pieces. All Jumbo's work was spirited and it is too bad he is no longer active. From his semi-retirement he reported the other day: "I cannot recall all I set up and printed from one to fifty copies of; I did it for fun and as one might write a letter.... That's why I disapprove of these lists. They are seldom complete and are of no use unless they are." Of the items listed under the Jumbo imprint many are unique copies. The equipment used was that listed under The Grabhorn Press. Jumbo did acquire a small Reliance press, now in the possession of James D. Hart, but no one could ever get it to print properly so it was sold.

One of the most active presses in this area is the Quercus, operated since 1938 by Theodore M. and Frances Lilienthal and Edith Van Antwerp. The Querci have two hand presses. One is an Albion, once used for proofing in the Kelmscott Press of William Morris and the other a rather-seldom-seen type with an action known as the Stansbury in a Hoe frame.

The list of the Quercus Press is a long one and several significant first appearances are noted in it, particularly in the field of Robinson Jeffers'

poetry. The Quercus equipment has twice been used for display and audience participation purposes, once at the Mergenthaler Linotype Company in San Francisco, and again at the San Francisco Exposition in 1940, where it formed part of a display in commemoration of the five-hundredth anniversary of the invention of printing.

The Hart Press is now operated in Berkeley by James D. Hart and his wife, Ruth. As might be expected of the author of the "Oxford Companion to American Literature," the proprietor of this press has done many items of extreme interest in the field of American letters. His press equipment is the Reliance press formerly owned by Jane Grabhorn.

As indicated before, Hart's interest in printing was first manifested when he was a student at Stanford. His work covered in this survey, however, was done first with Wilder Bentley and later under the imprint he currently uses. William Everson, whose Equinox Press concludes this listing, did some apprentice time at The Hart Press.

The Press of Marie Louise and Jackson Burke has been chiefly notable for its habit of moving from place to place. If bibliographers should ever become interested, they might find it difficult to reconcile the various imprints and places of printing. The equipment consists of a large Peter Smith Acorn, probably the oldest hand press in this area, which is now unavailable in San Francisco, and a small Pilot platen press currently in use at Los Gatos. As the proprietors now live in Belmont, away from press equipment the current output is small. This press is a combination of author and printer, both professional. The main interest has been to print original matter and the distaff side of the imprint has provided a great deal of the material in the check list. Several students had their first exposure to the hand press at this press, among them Elinor Raas Heller and David Magee, who perhaps made fewer changes in the *Grabhorn Bibliography* because they were themselves setting type with me at the time of its printing. Others were Allene Levison, William Burgess, Robert W. Garrett and Duncan Houx Olmstead.

A newcomer to the ranks of the hand press printers of Northern California is William Everson, a recognized poet, whose most recent work was published this spring by New Direction. Everson's only production thus far is a broadside announcing the establishment of his Equinox Press in Berkeley. The quality of the work displayed in this piece, however, indicates an understanding and regard for sound

technique that makes one await with interest its future projects. Mary Fabilli, whose woodcut is used on this first broadside, is in reality Mrs. Everson; she should provide a source of original illustration beyond the capacity of most of the presses covered in this study.

In addition to the foregoing ten presses, there is a group which should be included as possessors or one-time possessors and operators of hand presses. Their work, however, has been of such ephemeral nature that no listing can be made.

Haywood Hunt has a small Hoe which is not fitted with tympan or frisket and so has been used for proofing only. Hartley E. Jackson, at San Jose State College, has recently completed a replica of a sixteenth-century press made in the college shops after specifications of Moxon. The firm of Taylor &Taylor has a beautiful Columbian press, one of three known specimens of this press in America. Thomas MacDonald, of Berkeley, has a very small Albion which he acquired from John Henry Nash. Bruce Rogers secured it for Nash in England, but it arrived in damaged condition and no work was ever done on it by Nash. MacDonald printed one piece on it after its repair but it is not being used now. Albert Sperisen owns one of the largest of the hand presses. It is an early newspaper Hoe with a bed approximately 30″ x 45″. It was on exhibition in the California Building at the 1939 Golden Gate International Exposition. Its mechanical condition never justified anything but rough galley proofs.

Leslie W. Masters, of Piedmont, acquired a small Hoe press, at one time in the Government Printing Office, from Wilder Bentley some years ago but apparently no work has been done on it. Harry Porte has the press formerly owned by The Grabhorn Press, but uses it only for ephemeral pieces.

To complete the record, there is an Acorn Press in Sutter's Fort in Sacramento. This press was described in an article in the *Quarterly News-Letter*, Volume XIII, No. 1.

The period covered by this survey is not long, but the material itself is significant. Much original work is included and many first printings are recorded. The hand press in Northern California has not only provided the operators with pleasure and self-expression, but a great deal of significant material has been brought in honest physical form before a limited but interested audience. Of the ten presses listed, only four are currently in operation, but the outlook for further work in the field is favorable none the less.

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I. The Grabhorn Press

Book ballades for Roxburghers, by Andrew Lang. 1928.

The begynning of the book of the subtyl historyes and fables of Esope. 1929.

The song of the Roxburghers: paper and ink and friendship, by E. V. *Weller.* 1934.

II. Wheatstalk Press (Carl I. Wheat)

A toast to the law, by Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes. 1928.

Poker as it was played in Deadwood in the fifties. 1928.

III. The Penguin Press

Tribute to William Sproule and Paul Shoup, by Leland Cutler. 1931.

IV. The Eucalyptus Press

Welcome; greetings to freshmen, by Aurelia Henry Reinhardt. 1932.

Fidgety people; an unsigned essay from Harper's new monthly magazine, April, 1851. 1933.

V. Archetype Press

The Roxburghe Club of San Francisco, February 12th, 1934; an apology for the hand press will be the subject of a paper by Wilder Bentley. 1934. (Acorn Press.)

Excursion on the bay, by Wilder Bentley. 1934. (Acorn Press.)

Unheroic couplets for the poets of New Albion, by Wilder Bentley. 1934. (Acorn Press.)

An open letter to our fellow craftsmen: to the author of the epic plan. 1934.

Decretal: the council in perfection . . . 1934.

Terza-rima sonnets, by Robin Lampson. 1935.

The true ballad of the galloping hearse, by William Henry Davenport. 1935.

The fifty books of the fifty books. 1935.

A song of Pindar in Hades, by Robin Lampson. 1935.

Ballade to vintners . . . , by Villon. 1935.

The letters of western authors: Foreword by Oscar Lewis. 1935.

A Christmas carol, sung to the King in the presence at White-Hall. 1935.

Poems, by Nora May French. 1936.

A Vulcan among the argonauts: being vivid excerpts from those most original and amusing memoirs of John Carr, blacksmith: edited by Robin Lampson. 1936.

Noel 1936 Noel! Hey Nonny No! 1936.

A letter from Samuel Johnson to Lord Chesterfield. 1936.

Merciles Beaute: a triple roundel, by Geoffrey Chaucer. 1936.

The mending of a continent, by Robin Lampson. 1937.

Hirose Tanso to a friend: translated by Chiura Obata, 1937.

Cruelty to seamen: being the case of Nichols & Couch, by Richard Henry Dana, Jr. (Assisted by James D. Hart.) 1937.
The printer's mistress to his wife, by Barbara Cowles. 1937.
Japanese flower arrangement: private instruction by Haruko Obata. 1937.
The printer to the poet, by Wilder Bentley. 1937.
The right eye of the commander: a New Year's legend of early California, by Bret Harte. 1937.
Hell's half-acre: an old Arizona song. (1937).
From the sierra to the sea. 1937.
The three cats, by Lewis Carroll. 1937.
On Christmas Day, by Thomas Traherne. 1937.
Psalm XXIII: a Psalm of King David. 1937.
Coast and valley towns of early California. Number 2: Monterey: note by George L. Harding. 1938.
The walrus and the carpenter, by Lewis Carroll. (The Broadside Club series, No. 1, sponsor: T. W. MacDonald.) 1938.
The elephant's child, by Rudyard Kipling. 1938.
California winter, by Edward Rowland Sill. (The Broadside Club series, No. 2, sponsor: Fulmer Mood.) 1938.
A treaty of trade and peace. (The Broadside Club series, No. 3, sponsor: Jack Starkweather.) 1939.
Six California tales, Number 1: The Gentleman in the Barrel, by Chester Bailey Fernald. 1939.
Black Bart, Po8. (The Broadside Club series, No. 4, sponsors: George Ezra Dane & George Fields.) 1939.
The chinaware of dreams, by Frances Revett Wallace. 1939.
N'en Parlons Plus! Excerpts from divers papers and chronicles of the Arts Club 1937-1938: edited by Wilder Bentley. 1939.
Peace, by Henry Vaughn. 1939.
The lion and the lamb, by Ambrose Bierce. 1939.
Hiawatha's photographing, by Lewis Carroll. 1939.
The king of California: an excerpt from an eighteenth century account of Drake's voyage around the world: with a Foreword by Earle V. Weller. 1940.
A hymn on the nativity, by Ben Jonson. 1940.
A notice to patrons and collectors of fine printing and limited editions. 1940.
Psalm CIII. 1940.
The plaint of the camel, by Charles Edward Carryll. 1940.
In the Holy Nativity of our Lord God: a hymn sung as by the shepherds, by Richard Crashaw. 1941.
The Nativitie, by Giles Fletcher the younger. 1942.

VI. Jumbo Press

A guide and handbook for amateurs of printing, by Jane Grabhorn. 1937.
Guest book of Marie Louise and Jackson Burke. 1937.

Guest book for Carol Sinton. 1937.
A treatise and some letters, by Jane Grabhorn. 1937.
Announcement of a surprise party. 1938.
Announcement of a party. 1938.
Robert Arlie Grabhorn, by Jane Grabhorn. 1938.
Valentine. (1938).
Type specimen (Grabhorn). (1938).
Insert for Goudy Gaudeamus. 1939.

VII. The Quercus Press

At the Quercus Press. (Printed by Edwin Grabhorn.) 1938.
Two poems, by Sara Bard Field and Charles Erskine Scott Wood. 1938.
L.B.L. on her eightieth birthday. 1938.
Points of the horse. 1938.
A memory of Solferino, by Henri Dunant. 1938.
Salute. (Printed by Valenti Angelo.) 1938.
In memoriam, Henry Harris, by Leon Rabinowitz. 1938.
Program for the Pro Arte Quartet. 1938.
Five poems, by Sherwood Anderson. 1939.
The house dog's grave, by Robinson Jeffers. 1939.
Christmas Psalm, by William Saroyan. 1939.
Often I wonder, by Melba Berry Bennett. 1939.
The world of books, by Clarence Day. 1939.
Poems, by R.R. 1939.
To my friends. (Printed by Jane Grabhorn.) 1939.
Keep heart O comrade, by Walt Whitman. 1939.
Dear Quercus. (Printed by Ward Ritchie.) 1939.
Appointment in Samarra. 1939.
Loyalty, by Elbert Hubbard. 1940.
A bid so typographically perfect. 1940.
An evening with William Morris' Albion proof press April 1st, 1940, by Albert M. Bender. 1940.
Albion Press No. 2331. (Printed at Mergenthaler Linotype Company, San Francisco.) 1940.
William Morris and the revival of hand printing. (Printed on Treasure Island at the Golden Gate International Exposition.) 1940.
Two consolations, by Robinson Jeffers. 1940.
To Bertha Louise and Roy Van Vliet. 1940.
Program for the Pro Arte Quartet. 1940.
For Leonora Armsby. 1940.
The condor, by Robinson Jeffers. 1940.
A short title catalog of the Quercus Press. 1940.
New Year 1941, Roxburghe Club announcement. 1941.
Albert M. Bender, a tribute, by Oscar Lewis. 1941.
Nurse's oath. 1941.
Resolution in honor of Irving R. Reichert. 1941.

A Thanksgiving, by Molly Flagg Magee. 1941.
San Francisco at Christmas, by Sherwood Anderson. 1941.
Roxburghe Club announcement. 1931.
Home for Christmas—California in the '60s, by Hugh Wiley. 1941.
For Vick on her eightieth. 1941.
Aboard the ferry boat Santa Clara, San Francisco Bay, April 12th, 1933, by Christopher Morley. 1941.
Telegraph Hill, by Jack Densham. 1943.
About rations. 1944.
Percy E. Foxworth, tribute, by Edgar Hoover. 1944.
Roxburghe Club announcement. 1945.
A madrigal for Megs. 1946.
Ballade of fog in the canyon, by Gelett Burgess. (California Poetry Folios, Part One.) 1947.
To our darling Elsie. 1947.
Natural music, by Robinson Jeffers. (California Poetry Folios, Part Twelve.) 1947.

VIII. The Hart Press

Cruelty to seamen: being the case of Nichols Couch, by Richard Henry Dana, Jr. (Printed at the Archetype Press by Wilder Bentley, assisted by James D. Hart.) 1937.
The world below the brine: a poem from the sea-drift section of leaves of grass, by Walt Whitman. 1940.
Portrait, by E. E. Cummings. 1940.
Constitutional metaphors: a review of James M. Beck's The Constitution of the United States, by Thomas Reed Powell. 1941.
An essay on scholarship, by Joseph Addison. 1941.
Christmas in Plymouth, 1621, by Governor William Bradford. 1941.
Muck-a-Muck: a parody of Fennimore Cooper's Leather-Stocking Tales, by Bret Harte. 1942.
Ode to the Virginian voyage, by Michael Drayton, with an introduction by J.D.H[art]. 1946.
The mote in the middle distance: a parody of Henry James, by Max Beerbohm. 1946.
George Washington, by Thomas Jefferson. 1947.
After this, sea, by Josephine Miles. (California Poetry Folios, Part Six.) 1947.
Bibliography of French plays, by Clarence D. Brenner. (Title page and table of contents designed and printed for photolithographic reproduction.) 1947.
A forty niner's Christmas, by William Downie. 1947.

IX. Press of Marie Louise and Jackson Burke

The price of printing by hand. 1939.
Announcement of a course in hand printing. 1939.


Gertrude Atherton
1857 · 1948

WHEN *Gertrude Atherton* celebrated her 90th birthday last October, one of her friends remarked that more than any other San Franciscan she symbolized those qualities that have made her native city the capricious, charming and paradoxical place it is.

It is a thought that must have occurred to many others. For in her own special way she had a great deal in common with the pioneer town into which she was born in 1857, during the very first decade of its corporate existence. Both had haphazard, unconventional beginnings; both grew to maturity amid the turmoil, violence and open-handed generosity of the frontier. And both carried into their later years the salient marks of their up-bringing: self-reliance, magnanimity, a shrewd insight into the strengths and weaknesses of mankind and a gift of viewing both clearly and with tolerance.

Throughout her career — and her productive life covered a longer span than any other first-rate American writer — she consistently steered an independent course, holding herself aloof from passing trends and fashions. She was content to go her own way, belonging to no schools, scorning to bid for an easy popularity by adapting her themes or treatment to current tastes. If some future student of American literature were to read her sixty-odd books consecu-

tively, hoping thus to trace the trends in fiction over the past seven decades, he would end in confusion, for few of Gertrude Atherton's books are "dated." This does not mean that she ignored the challenges of her own period; on the contrary she was constantly alert to the ferment of life about her, and nearly all her novels of lasting worth deal with themes of contemporary significance. She was always in step with her times, except — as she herself once said — when she was in advance of them. This last remark was characteristic. She was a serious artist with an abiding respect for the responsibilities of authorship, and if she refused to depreciate her own work, time has amply proved that her estimate of its value was soundly based.

Much of her long and productive life was spent far afield from San Francisco, in London, Paris, New York and dozens of other places at home and abroad. But it was to her native city that she always returned. It was here that she chose to live out the final decades of her amazing career, and it was of San Francisco that she wrote most often and with an unfailing zest. There is something singularly appropriate in the fact that her last book, published only a year ago, was called *My San Francisco.* It was her final tribute to an admired contemporary, for both author and subject literally grew up together.



THIS SKETCH BY OSCAR LEWIS
WAS *written expressly for this particular supplement to the Quarterly News-Letter. It was designed, hand-set in Bulmer type, and printed on all-rag Oxbow paper by Lewis & Dorothy Allen at The L-D Allen Press, August 1948. The title page illustration was cut by Mallette Dean.*

On the world, by Frances Quarles. 1939.
The occupations of Christophe Beys, February 21, 1587. (Printer's Galaxy No. 1.) 1939.
Roxburghe Club meeting announcement. 1939.
Of handling books in a cleanly manner, and keeping them in order. Fragment from philobiblon, by Richard de Bury. (Printed by Robert W. Garrett.) 1939.
King George VI, on the outbreak of war. (Printed by William Burgess, Eleanor Raas Heller, Allene Levison and David Magee.) 1939.
Epithalamium in prose, by Marie Louise Burke. 1940.
The first picture of a printing press; Lyon 1499. 1940.
Scheme for a printing office. Benjamin Franklin to William Strahan. (Printer's Galaxy No. 2.) 1940.
There is no such thing as luck. 1940.
Prelum to Albion, a history of the development of the hand press from Gutenberg to Morris, by Jackson Burke. 1940.
17 verses and curses, by Marie Louise Burke. 1940.
Roxburghe Club meeting announcement. 1940.
San Francisco archers' rules for rovers. 1940.
The old adobe, a letter from M. G. Vallejo. (Printed by Duncan Houx Olmstead.) 1941.
The printer's mark of Josse Badius. (Printer's Galaxy No. 3.) 1942.

X. The Equinox Press (William Everson)
The Equinox Press, announcing the establishment of a private press. 1947.

BOOKS OF THE GOLD RUSH

By J. Gregg Layne

Probably no epoch in American history has produced a greater number of books than did that of the great Gold Rush of 1849 and the early fifties.

Hundreds of books were written on the Gold Rush and scores of them are of real value, both historically and as contributions to literature. Every collector of Californiana and every student of California history has his fixed ideas regarding the most desirable, the most important and the most valuable of the many that have been published.

Since space is not available for a long list of books on the subject, I have made a selection of twelve, my selection, which I consider

Editor's Note: Mr. Layne's annotated list of twelve books of the California Gold Rush he considers of particular importance forms an interesting supplement to "Gold Rush Literature: A Symposium," which formed the leading article in the Spring 1948 number of the *Quarterly.*

the most important and valuable of the books written on the great California Gold Rush.

All but one in this list are collector's items which, of course, will not depreciate their value as contributions to the history of the epochal period.

1. *A tour of duty in California including a description of the Gold Region.* New York, 1849. 305 pages, Map and 6 litho plates. By Lt. Joseph Warren Revere (grandson of Paul Revere).

   One of the earliest accounts of the Gold Region and the only contemporary who gives the actual date of the raising of the Bear Flag at Sonoma. Contains Col. Mason's Report on Gold Region.

2. *Six months in the gold mines.* Philadelphia, 1850. xxiv, 172 pages. By Lt. E. Gould Buffum.

   Written by a member of Stevenson's Regiment who was in California at the time of the Discovery of Gold. Excellent first-hand account.

3. *Personal adventures in Upper and Lower California in 1848-49.* London, 1850. 2 vols. I, vii, 347; II, 413 pages, 3 tinted lithos and 20 full-page wood cuts. By Wm. Redmond Ryan.

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Ryan was also a member of Stevenson's Regiment. A scarce book in good condition and a valuable first-hand account.

4. *California:* its past history; its present position; its future prospects. The discovery of the gold region. The Mormon settlements. London, 1850. 270 pages. Ills. map.

   This is a rare and, Cowan says, a valuable piece of Californiana, containing far more history than most of the books of its time. I have seen but seven copies of this book in the last thirty years. The book should have one colored frontispiece, a colored second title-page, a colored plate and a colored map of "Upper California." Some copies have an extra plate, but two only that I have seen have it.

5. *Three years in California.* By Walter Colton, U.S.N. New York, 1850. 456 pages. Map, 6 portraits, 6 tinted plates. Fldg. facsimile of the Declaration of Rights in the Constitution of California.

   The six plates and the folding Declaration of Rights containing all the signatures of the members of the Convention at Monterey are often missing. In good condition and complete the book has become scarce.

6. *Eldorado; or, adventures in the path of empire.* By Bayard Taylor. New York, 1850. 2 vols. I, xii, 251; II, 247 pages. Tinted lithos. Each volume should have four plates. There was an edition published simultaneously in London, and the same year a second edition was published in both New York and London.

   This is probably the outstanding book on the Gold Rush. It gives the best picture of the Constitutional Convention we have.

7. *Sixteen months at the gold diggings.* By Daniel B. Wood. New York, 1851. 199 pages.

   Considered by many authorities as one of the best narratives of its time.

8. *California illustrated:* including a description of the Panama and Nicaragua routes. By a returned Californian. New York, 1852. Tinted plates. 244 pages.

   The book was written by J. M. Letts, and was reprinted in 1853 under a new title, *A Pictorial View of California,* but from the original plates. To be complete the book should have forty-eight plates. Evidently more complete sets of the text were printed than plates, for often copies are seen with twelve and even six plates only. In good condition this book is rare. The first edition is almost never seen for sale. Generally the plates are foxed. But it is an interesting book and worth owning in any condition.

9. *Mountains and mole hills or recollections of a burnt journal.* By Frank Marryat. London, 1855. xii, 445 pages. Ills. Tinted plates.

   A beautiful book with eight colored litho plates and eighteen wood-cut illustrations in the text. An edition was published in New York the same year, but without the colored plates and in smaller size. The outstanding plate is the San Francisco waterfront, "High and Dry."

10. *Three years in California.* By J. D. Borthwick. Edinburgh & London, 1857.

384 pages, 8 lithograph plates.

The plates in this scarce book are probably as fine as any the art of lithography has produced. A cheaper edition was published in 1917, by Outing Publishing Company and edited by Horace Kephart, but without plates. Considered the best Gold Rush book by many.

11. *Mining camps*, a study in American frontier government. By Charles Howard Shinn. New York, 1885, Chas. Scribner. 316 pages.

The best account of law and order at the mines. The original edition has become scarce. Alfred Knopf, New York, has just published, 1948, the first reprint of the book with an introduction by Joseph Henry Jackson, giving a fine appraisal of the author.

12. *California gold*. The beginning of mining in the far west. By Rodman W. Paul. Cambridge, 1947. 380 pages, illustrated.

This book covers twenty-five years of gold mining in California, from 1848 to 1873 inclusive, giving statistical matter often omitted by historians. I would say that it is the most valuable addition to the books of the Gold Rush that has been made in recent years. It contains an excellent Bibliography. Mr. Paul's style is pleasing.

THE CHRISTMAS BOOK

THE GRABHORN PRESS, you will be glad to know, is presently engaged on the Club's Christmas Book, this time an item quite unlike anything the Club has offered its members.

It's a dime novel, one of the few that were written about California in a day when examples of that literary form were commonly devoted either to tales of cowboys and buffalo or clever criminal-catchers operating on New York's East Side. This one is a gem of its kind as perhaps the title will show you. It is called *Ace High the Frisco Detective, or The Girl Sport's Double Game* and bears the subtitle, *A Story of the Sierra and the Golden Gate City*.

David Magee has written an amusing and scholarly Foreword for the book, in which he traces some of the directions the dime novel took three-quarters of a century ago, and comments upon this particular exemplar and its author, once widely known to thousands of avid readers, Mr. C. E. Tripp.

The Grabhorns themselves admit that they find both challenge and considerable entertainment in working out the design and decorations for this book, and members will know that something unusual—and beautiful too—is bound to come out of it all. The book, done in the customary small edition for members only, will be priced at $8.50.

Quarterly News-Letter

PUBLICATIONS COMMITTEE

Your Publications Committee reports that a few copies of the Grabhorn *Thirteen California Towns* may still be had, and that the rule against members acquiring more than one copy has been set aside temporarily for this book. Those who already have one copy may have a second, at the publication price of $16.50, plus tax. Better order immediately if you'd like a second copy, for the number on hand is small.

In case you'd like to know the towns represented in this 13 drawings by an unknown artist of the middle 1850s, here is the list: Folsom, Benicia, Vallejo and Mare Island, Martinez, Alviso, Santa Cruz, San Juan Bautista, Monterey, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, San Bernardino, Los Angeles and San Diego.

Coming shortly after the first of the year is a Club book which bears a rather special relation to the Centennial now in course of celebration throughout California. It is a selected biography of 49 titles reflecting the various aspects of the Gold Rush in California—and to California also, for that matter. You may recall that a month or two ago members who were collectors in the field were sent nomination blanks so that they might suggest titles for inclusion in this selected bibliography. From nominations thus made and from other sources, a committee appointed for the purpose has developed its list of 49 titles; these will constitute the small volume, complete with precise bibliographical data and such general notes in each case as the committee feels will add to the interest of the book. Tentative title is *The Gold Rush Forty-Nine: A Selective Bibliography*. Probable date of publication, February, perhaps February 28, the day on which the *California* stood through the Golden Gate bearing the first forty-niners from out-of-State parts.

LETTERS OF THE GOLD DISCOVERY

"His [Thomas O. Larkin's] correspondence, both with his mercantile friends in California and with the State Department at Washington . . . is the best source extant concerning the moods, the hopes, the fears, the murmurings, the petty personal quarrels, the private gossip, and the whole social life of the American traders in California before the conquest; and . . . is the only source, save the Washington archives, whence

can be derived a knowledge of the true official story of the conquest itself."

The above paragraph from Josiah Royce's *California*, recently reissued in a handsome new edition, restates a fact already well known to everyone who has examined the historical documents relating to events in California a century ago. And it makes clear the reason why in the Club's current keepsake series, *Letters of the Gold Discovery*, the name of United States Consul Thomas O. Larkin is so frequently mentioned, for there were few important events connected with the conquest in which Larkin did not have a hand, and usually a decisive one.

It is hoped that before this issue of the *News-Letter* reaches members, they will have received two more parts of this series, bringing it to the half-way point. The fact that deliveries of these extremely interesting folders have fallen behind schedule is easily explained: they are being designed and printed by California private presses; that is, by amateur printers who pursue their pleasant hobby in their spare time, on week-ends and during spare moments. However, members

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will be glad to know that copy for all twelve of the folders is now in the hands of the printers; that all are in active production, and there is every reason to believe that the series will be completed before the end of the calendar year. That it will be one of the most interesting, and historically important, series the Club has yet issued is evident from the number and enthusiasm of the comments already received.

Plans for the 1949 keepsakes are in their preliminary stages, with a number of interesting subjects under consideration. It is expected that a definite decision will be reached in time to announce it in the next issue of the *Quarterly*.

A NOTE ON THE NEWS-LETTER

THIS ISSUE COMPLETES Volume XIII of the Club's *Quarterly*, and the second volume in its new format. This seems a good time, therefore, for the editorial committee to render an informal report on the journal's present status and future prospects.

When the committee members took over their assignment in the fall of 1946 their one aim was to serve the interests of Pacific Coast collectors by providing them with a lively and informative little paper, edited with an eye to their particular needs and interests.

The committee is aware that, as of now, the *News-Letter* still falls some distance short of the goal set for it. However, the past eight numbers is an indication of the type of journal the committee has been trying to get out, and it will be extremely helpful in planning future issues if members will state whether or not they find the *Quarterly* as now constituted interesting and useful. This is, therefore, an invitation to members to make constructive suggestions. How can its usefulness be increased? What type of articles are most interesting? Should there be more—or fewer—news items? Is your particular collecting field adequately covered and, if not, can you suggest subjects for future articles?

Comment along these lines will be cordially welcomed by the committee members, all of whom serve on a volunteer basis and are able to devote only a limited amount of time to the project. Currently there is one pressing need. Production costs are now so high that it would be impossible to get out the *Quarterly* without a certain amount of revenue from advertising. Committee members are fully occupied with their editorial duties, with no time to spare for this necessary

side-issue; besides they are all rank amateurs in this business of handling ads. The *News-Letter* could use a business and advertising manager, and if any member wishes to volunteer for the post the committee will be delighted to hear from him. He will be sure of the gratitude of the editorial committee and it is possible too that he will gain some valuable experience.

Frank comment on any or all of these matters is invited by your committee members, who hope and believe that with the help of the members as a whole the *News-Letter* can in the future perform an increasingly valuable service to collectors all over the coast.

ELECTED TO MEMBERSHIP

The following have been elected to membership since the Summer issue of the *News-Letter:*

MEMBER		SPONSOR
Shirley H. Baker	San Francisco	Walter S. Heller
Robert Barker	Placerville	Mrs. William H. Voiles
Robert A. Benioff	San Francisco	Douglas Black
Mrs. Gerald Bolster	New York, N. Y.	Llewellyn Bates Keim
Dr. George L. Browning	Sacramento	Dr. Harold Zimmerman
George Chalmers	San Francisco	Mrs. Elizabeth Downs
Kenneth C. Christensen	San Francisco	James W. Elliott
Fullerton Public Library	Fullerton	J. Elizabeth Calmon
Alexander F. Haas	Los Angeles	Oscar Lewis
Mrs. W. F. Hellman	San Francisco	T. M. Lilienthal
Mrs. J. N. Henderson	Eureka	Miss Edith M. Coulter
Miss Isabel Hooper Jackson	Berkeley	Miss Edith M. Coulter
F. T. Harper	San Francisco	David Magee
Mrs. Morton Schwabacher	Seattle, Wash.	Edgar M. Kahn
Reuben L. Underhill	Berkeley	Oscar Lewis
Library, University of Southern California	Los Angeles	Miss Christian R. Dick
Warren W. Unna	San Mateo	Martin S. Mitau
Arthur Woodward	Los Angeles	Mrs. Elizabeth Downs

With the election of the above, the Club's membership roll is only a few short of its allowable maximum of six hundred. Once the remaining places are filled, a waiting list will be established, and thereafter new members will be admitted as vacancies occur, and in the order in which their applications are received.

A limited number of sets of the current keepsake series, *Letters of*

the Gold Discovery, have been reserved for incoming members who join during the remainder of 1948. As long as the supply lasts, these will be forwarded to new members upon their election.

MISCELLANY

THE INSERT sent out with this number of the *News-Letter* has been designed and printed by the L-D Allen Press as a tribute to the memory of Gertrude Atherton, long the dean of California writers, who died a few weeks ago full of years and honors.

American friends of the late great Welsh writer, Arthur Machen, who died in 1947, have formed the Arthur Machen Society with the intent of increasing interest in the man and his work. Vincent Starrett has been elected Honorary President; Nathan Van Patten, President; and James T. Babb, Librarian at Yale University, Secretary.

Members may recall that during the past few years the L-D Allen Press printed for the Club *Heraldry of New Helvetia*, *The Diary of Patrick Breen*, *Donner Miscellany*, and keepsakes in the Poetry and Gold Rush Letters series. Now, this private press announces the printing and publishing of *Essays of Montaigne*, to be available this Fall in an edition of 200 copies. The Essays included were selected, translated and edited by Professor Francis Carmody. The book has been set in Garamont, a face based on the types used during the Montaigne era. Also in the 16th century tradition, Mallette Dean is designing and cutting a special series of head-bands and initials to be printed in several colors. Address inquiries to 20 Laureldale Road, Hillsborough, San Mateo, California.

A biography of the late Frederic W. Goudy will be published early in the Spring. It has been written by Howard Coggeshall, Utica printer and life-long friend of the great type designer who died last year at the age of 82.

The third volume of Knopf's *Western Americana Series*, a reissue of Josiah Royce's *California*, is now in dealers' hands. The fourth volume, *The Shirley Letters*, with an introduction by Carl I. Wheat, is about to go to press.

The Book Club of California

The University of California Press announces a series of books on the California scene. The highlights are: *California Place Names*, edited by Erwin G. Gudde; Francis Farquhar's *Yosemite, the Big Trees and the High Sierra; Gold is the Cornerstone*, by John Walton Caughey; *California Pictorial*, by Edith Coulter and Jeanne Van Nostrand; and *Title to the Land*, by W. W. Robinson.

Bruce Rogers, probably the world's foremost typographical designer, has designed for Mackenzie & Harris, 659 Folsom Street, San Francisco, a broadsheet showing of his famous type, Centaur. The text, an appraisal of Mr. Rogers, was written by Robert Grabhorn and is to be printed by Taylor & Taylor. Carroll T. Harris has generously offered to supply this keepsake to any member who writes him at the above address.

Alma Lavenson (Mrs. Matt Wahrhaftig) had an exhibition of her fine photographs of the California Mother Lode at the San Francisco Museum of Art, July 26 to August 29.

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The California Centennials Commission Historical Caravan is expected to begin its tour of the State in October, with a precious cargo of original documents and objects from leading museums, libraries and universities. These items, arranged to tell the highlights of California's history from Francis Drake to the present, will be exhibited in two large buses reconstructed for this special purpose.

Fourteen exhibit cases will feature such things as Drake's "plate of brasse"; Portola's Diary; Sloat's proclamation at the raising of the U.S. Flag in Monterey; the tiny doll which Patty Reed carried in the Donner Party; the first book printed in California, by Zamorano; and other material unique and historically significant.

The Centennials Commission, appointed by Governor Warren, in accordance with legislative act, plans to send the caravan to towns and cities throughout the State for the next two years. Elaborate precautions are being taken to safeguard the exhibits from theft, fire and other hazards.

The Centennials Commission, of which Joseph R. Knowland is chairman and George Heinz executive secretary, engaged Dr. Aubrey Neasham and Carroll D. Hall to plan and assemble the caravan. Neasham is regional historian for the National Park Service, on leave; Hall is curator of Sutter's Fort Historical Museum, Sacramento.

Nine years after its first printing, The Huntington Library has published a new edition of Lyle H. Wright's invaluable *American Fiction: 1774-1850*, still modestly subtitled "A Contribution Toward a Bibliography." Handsomely printed by Ward Ritchie and priced at six dollars, the book is one of the essential tools for the student and collector of American literature.

This reference book presenting a check list of all early American novels, prose tales, romances, and novelettes is not only a necessity for social historians and literary scholars, but also for collectors of American literature, who will find in it bibliographical data on first editions, descriptions of all known reprintings prior to 1851, and annotations indicating which of the main U.S. libraries own copies.

The revision is more convenient to use than the first edition, because novels can now be located by date of publication as well as by author and title, and it is far more complete than even the first edition, until now the best census of our nation's fiction. With the addition of 300 new titles and 300 editions of previously noted works, Mr. Wright

now lists nearly 1700 titles and the 2772 editions in which they appeared. This supplementary information adds more than a hundred pages to the first edition, extending the present work to 355 pages in all.

Those who are interested in Californiana, very little of which appeared in the period under survey, will undoubtedly join other scholars and collectors of American literature in urging Mr. Wright to continue his careful work, hoping in course of time to see a third edition of *American Fiction* bringing his bibliographical investigation down to a more recent date.

Corrections: Through an unhappy oversight, we neglected to credit Mr. Edwin H. Carpenter, Jr. as the author of *Clyde Browne—Master Printer*, in our last issue. And, we are a bit dismayed at our reviewer who, without proper checking, credited an error in the *Gutenberg to Grabhorn* catalogue issued by Dawson's. The listing, "a test page for West Wind," *is* a Grabhorn item, although the book was published by Johnck & Seeger, which is a trifle confusing, even now.

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